**Introduction**

You are a seasoned psychiatrist who is being called as an expert witness in a murder trial.  The individual is on trial for murdering ha nurse hired to give him round-the clock care in his home.  The nurse had assisted the bed-ridden man, who is nearly 500 lbs. and is an ex-heroin addict who must receive Methadone.

The man's defense is trying to blame all of his problems on his genetic makeup.  According to them, his bad genes have caused him to gain too much weight, to become addicted to drugs, and possibly to commit the murder itself.  That is, the defense is claiming that their genetic experts have pinpointed a so-called "evil" gene in the man's DNA.  They are claiming that any other person with the same genes put in the same situation would have acted the same way.

But, the prosecution has a trick up their sleeve.  They have located the man's long-lost identical twin brother who is around 200 lbs. and has no prior record of drug use or crime.

If the man's defense is built upon his bad genetic makeup, how can the introduction of an identical twin brother with different characteristics change the entire case?

**The Task**

The issue at hand in the murder trial is that of "Nature versus Nurture."  To investigate the arguments of the defense and the prosecution, your team will become [social psychologists and genetic psychologists](http://www.apa.org/monitor/nov04/nature.html).

Half of your team will take the "nurture" stance of social psychologists, while the other half take the "nature" position of genetic psychologists.

**Some questions to consider during this Web Quest:**

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| bullet | Why are twins used to study the issue of nature versus nurture? |
| bullet | How could genes and DNA possibly effect people's tastes, decisions, and characteristics? |
| bullet | What types of environmental factors could play upon people's tastes, decisions, and characteristics? |
| bullet | What are the potential problems of *only* considering genes or *only* environment? |

**The Process**

1. First, you will be assigned to a team of 4 students.
2. There will be 2 social psychologists and 2 genetic psychologists per group.
3. Both social psychologists and genetic psychologists will investigate the issue of nature versus nurture using the following Internet resources.

**Resources:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A Second Look at Twin Studies | <http://www.apa.org/monitor/apr04/second.html> |
| Identical Twins Become Brother and Sister | <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=267325&page=1> |
| Reunited Twins | <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3343763.stm> |
| "Nature's Clone" | <http://health.yahoo.com/health/centers/personality/897> |
| A 'Gay Gene'? | <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/assault/genetics/> |
| Is it all because of genes? | <http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/lifesciences/students/gurmit.html> |
| Fat gene | <http://www.imakenews.com/bioanalogics/e_article000111771.cfm> |
| Evil gene | <http://www.research.fsu.edu/researchr/spring96/features/evil.html> |
| Intelligence gene | <http://www.mugu.com/upstream-list-archive/1996-1998/msg00496.html> |
| Genes=Bad Habits? | <http://www.betterhumans.com/News/news.aspx?articleID=2003-06-19-2> |

1. There are ten links to review.  The social psychologists should work as a pair and genetic psychologists should work as a pair.  The respective pairs may want to split the links into 5 and 5 to conserve time.
2. **Social psychologists** should pick out information from the resources that supports their position of "nurture."  That is, they believe that the way people behave and their characteristics are the result of their upbringing and environment--everything "outside" of the individual.
3. **Genetic psychologists** should pick out information from the resources that supports their position of "nature."  That is, they believe that people's behavior is dictated by the genes and DNA that they were born with.  Though the environment might change, there is little that can change an individual's core characteristics.
4. **Gathering info:** Both pairs may want to experiment with copying information from the resources that fits their argument and pasting it into a word processing document, such as Microsoft Word. *(For assistance with these features, ask Miss Bonacci.)* When gathering information, be sure to also [credit the reference](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html) that provided it.
5. After gathering information on your designated point of view, organize it into an attractive Microsoft PowerPoint presentation to present to your Intro to Psychology classmates.

**Presentation:**

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| --- | --- |
| bullet | 8-12 minute presentation with PowerPoint |
| bullet | Introductory summary of the Nature versus Nurture issue |
| bullet | Both pairs should cover:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | bullet | What their side of the debate believes | | bullet | Their position’s strengths and weaknesses | | bullet | Specific examples (from the Internet resources) that best exemplify that their position is credible | |
| bullet | Each team member should speak for 2-3 minutes to meet the time requirement. |
| bullet | Summary of why this issue is important to everyone |

**Evaluation**

80%--The bulk of your grade will be determined by how completely your team meets the guidelines of the assignment, which are listed just above (under "Presentation") and below in the rubric.

20%--Team members will also be given an opportunity to confidentially evaluate their teammates following the PowerPoint Presentation.

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|  | **Beginning**  **1** | **Developing**  **2** | **Accomplished**  **3** | **Exemplary**  **4** | **Score** |
| **Use of Class and Lab Time** | Team used no class and lab time to perform Web Quest. | Team was *frequently* were off-task with content unrelated to Web Quest. | Team used class and lab time to perform Web Quest, but had to be reminded to stay on task. | Team used class and lab time to perform Web Quest and never had to be reminded to stay on task. |  |
| **PowerPoint Presentation Length** | PowerPoint presentation was under 7 minutes long. | PowerPoint presentation was 7:00 to 7:59 minutes long. | PowerPoint presentation was longer than 12 minutes and 30 seconds. | PowerPoint presentation was 8 - 12 minutes long. |  |
| **PowerPoint Presentation Content** | PowerPoint included: \*Incomplete list of strengths & weaknesses  \*Incomplete Introductory Summary **and/or**  \*Incomplete End Summary | PowerPoint included: \*Introductory Summary of issue \*Incomplete list of strengths & weaknesses of either position \*End Summary | PowerPoint included:  \*Introductory Summary of issue \*Strengths & Weaknesses of both positions \*End Summary | PowerPoint included: \*Introductory Summary of issue \*Strengths & Weaknesses of both positions \*Specific examples from Internet resources \*End Summary |  |
| **PowerPoint Presentation Format** | PowerPoint presentation was plainly formatted and disorganized. | PowerPoint presentation plainly formatted and organizedh | PowerPoint presentation was attractively formatted and well-organized. | PowerPoint presentation was attractively formatted, made good use of multimedia, and was well-organized. |  |
| **Use of Web Quest Resources** | Content of PowerPoint presentation reflects that Web Quest resources were virtually ignored and not utilized. | Content of PowerPoint presentation reflects that Web Quest resources were skimmed and not fully utilized. | Content of PowerPoint presentation reflects that Web Quest resources were read and utilized. | Content of PowerPoint presentation reflects that Web Quest resources were read carefully and utilized effectively. |  |

**Conclusion**

**So, is it possible to know which *is* more important, nature or nurture?**

One of the on-going, and seemingly un-solvable, debates in the fields of psychology and sociology is the issue of "Nature versus Nurture."  Which matters more in the outcome of how people ultimately 'end up' in life: the genes with which they were born or the way in which they were raised and their life experiences?  Is one more important than the other, or does some undetermined combination of the two make a person who he or she is?

**This Web Quest should have given you a better feeling for which component, nature or nurture, you believe is more important!**

*Expanding Your Mind . . .!* Some related topics:

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| bullet | [Free Will and Moral Responsibility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will#Moral_responsibility) |
| bullet | [Coping: Accepting Personal Responsibility](http://www.coping.org/growth/accept.htm#What) |
| bullet | [Does Violence in Video Games Lead to Real Violence?](http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org/articles/20040114/Feature1.asp) |